

Hi All: This week's notes are devoted to a description of our playoff system. While there **is** still a lot of regular season baseball left, we figure some of you might want to make a trade with the playoffs in mind, so here is a detailed playoff explanation.

In two and three division leagues that follow our normal rules, the division winners, plus one wild card, will make the playoffs. For 2 division leagues, the division winner with the best record gets a bye, while the division winner with the worse record plays the wild card team in round 1. **In 3 division leagues, the division winner with the best record will face the playoff team with the worst record** (even if that is a wild card from the same division), while the 2nd and 3rd best record teams face off in the other matchup. If you are in a private league your playoff set-up was sent out with your draft results, and is also shown each week on your web page (above the season schedule). Please let us know if the set-up we show is not correct!

In all playoff series, **playing time** limits will be based on player's **major league playing time** in games from Labor Day (Sept 7th) through Sunday Oct 4th (the final 4 full weeks of the regular season). Hitters have up to 40% of their total major league plate appearances during those final 4 weeks of the season available for use in each *Scoresheet* playoff series. Pitchers in the *Scoresheet* playoffs will be limited to pitching up to **45%** as many innings in each series as they pitched in the majors during the final 4 weeks of the season. (The limits **do** start over for each series.) For a pitcher to start for you in the playoffs he must start at least once in the majors the last 4 weeks of the season. If one of your top 4 listed starters does not get a start during that time then for the playoffs we will drop him to the bullpen, with an earliest inning of 1, a hook of 3, and a rank as a reliever versus both left and right handed batters of 5. If your 5th starter is not needed to start then he goes to the pen with those same numbers. For a pitcher to start twice for you in the playoffs he must have at least 3 major-league starts the final 4 weeks of the season. Also, to pitch a complete game in the playoffs a starter must have a complete game in the majors during the final 4 weeks of the season.

All playoff series will be a best of 7. A pitcher can start at most 2 playoff games for your team, and you will always use **at least** 4 different starting pitchers in the playoffs. NOTE: The pitchers you have who will start twice during the 7 games will start games 1, 2 and 3, in the order they are listed in your rotation. However, if a pitcher can only start once he will start game 4, even if he is listed as your number 1, 2 or 3 starter.

These limits are set up so that even if your players do some sitting in the majors in September, they should still be able to play pretty close to full time for you in the playoffs. However, since playing time in the playoffs is just based on how much they play in those last 4 weeks, **a player who does not play at all in the**

**majors in the last 4 weeks of the season will not play at all for you in the *Scoresheet* playoffs!** We base playing time on the last 4 weeks so that a team can not trade for a hurt player who is not going to play again this year and then use his early season stats for the playoffs. After all, a team that is not headed to the playoffs would have no use for a hurt player, so would give him up for virtually nothing. We don't want some team getting unfairly strengthened for the playoffs by trading very little for such a player, and then getting to use him, so we designed the playing time limit to eliminate such deals.

**How a player does** will be based **40%** on how he does **in the majors** the last 4 weeks of the season, the other 60% is based on how he did in the majors before Labor Day, **assuming** he was a full-time player all year. For you folks who love exact numbers, **the exact way we figure out what stats a player uses for the playoffs is:** we multiply his major league stats for games beginning with Labor Day by 3.33, then add in his stats from all the games before Labor Day. Thus if he played the same amount of time in the majors for the whole year, a player's major league stats after Labor Day would count for 40%, and the ones before Labor Day would count 60%. If a guy plays more per week in the majors in the last 4 weeks than he did earlier in the year then his stats for the last 4 weeks would count for more than 40%; if he plays less in the last 4 weeks than those stats would count less than the normal 40%. All stats are based on a player's **major league** performance, NOT his *Scoresheet* numbers.

Whatever lineup you have in effect for games played the week of Labor Day thru September 13th is your playoff lineup also; **OR**, you can choose to submit a **'playoff only' lineup**. The 'playoff only' lineup form will be up on the web next week (Wed. August 26th. In years past having that 'playoff only' form up all season caused some confusion, so this year we are not putting it up until 12 days before the due date.) The playoff lineup form is a separate form from your regular lineup, meaning that making a playoff lineup will NOT erase or change your regular lineup.

If you want to turn in a 'playoff only' lineup it still needs to be submitted by Labor Day, before the first MLB game begins Sept 7th. The reason we have this early deadline for playoff lineups is we want to keep *Scoresheet* a game of predicting how players will do in upcoming major league games. We do use stats from earlier in the season because after listening to owners comments in past seasons it seems most of you feel the team that has been better all year long should have a better chance at winning the playoffs - but by using September stats so heavily the element of 'prediction' still exists. Once again, **you do NOT have to turn in a special playoff lineup**. If you don't, we'll simply use whatever lineup you have in effect for *Scoresheet* games Sept. 7th thru 13th as your playoff lineup also.

Have a great week! - Jeff Barton